Pam-Misc. Romig, W. H. 1616

The Moravian Church.

THE MORAVIAN CHURCH.

A TREATISE GIVING INFORMATION IN REGARD TO THE HISTORY, DOCTRINE, GOVERNMENT, DISCIPLINE, STRENGTH AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE MORAVIAN CHURCH, IN A BRIEF AND CONCISE FORM,

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BY

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The Moravian Church.

OUR MOTTO:

IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY; IN NON-ESSENTIALS, LIBERTY;
IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY.

THE purpose of this pamphlet is to give information in regard to the Moravian Church to those not fully acquainted with it, to answer some questions often asked, and to remove, as far as possible, any prejudice that may exist, by better information. It is not possible, however, in so small a pamphlet, to give more than a brief sketch of leading features of the Church, in an informal and unofficial manner.

THE NAME.

The Church is usually known in this country, by the name of Moravian, or Moravian Episcopal. It was first given this name by the Germans, because many of the members of the first church in Germany came from the Province of Moravia. It was afterwards adopted as one of the names of the Church. The ancient name, however, was the *Unitas Fratrum*, a Latin name, usually translated, The United Brethren, or, The Brethren's Unity. This has led to some confusion, since there is another well-known church usually called The United Brethren. This church is entirely distinct from the Church of the United Brethren, or Unitas Fratrum, which had borne this title more than three centuries before the excellent modern Church of "The United Brethren in Christ" came into existence.

Our usual name, however, in this country is The Moravian Church, so there need be no confusion. The ancient name, however, is the more correct title of the Church, and more accurately expresses its fraternal character.

HISTORY.

Many books have been written on different parts of our history, but here only a brief sketch can be given. The movement that resulted in the founding of the Moravian Church, began with John Hus, the noble Bohemian reformer and martyr. The life of Hus is a part of universal history as truly as is the life of Martin Luther. Born in Bohemia, July 6th, 1369, he received a very liberal education. At the age of thirty-three he had become Rector of the University of Prague, the greatest university of the world in his day. From this point of advantage he began to preach Christ crucified as the Saviour of sinners, in the language of the people, to exalt the Word of God as having superior authority to the word of the Pope, and to attack the sins of the priests. Hus was a great preacher, who soon had for his audience the larger part of the Bohemian nation. He early came into conflict with Rome. He was burned at the stake at Constance, Switzerland, by order of the Ecumenical Council of Constance, July 6th, 1415. Jerome of Prague, a great orator, a learned scholar and a noble knight suffered the same fate. After this followed the terrible Hussite wars, the struggles of the Bohemian people to throw off the yoke of Rome and attain religious liberty. When these wars had subsided, there arose in 1457, men of God who cherished the pure and peaceful doctrines of John Hus. These united together, and during the eight succeeding years organized the

UNITAS FRATRUM.

Thus the Moravian Church dates its origin from March 1st, 1457, and more than four centuries of its labors have passed into history. The Church grew and flourished. By 1517, the date of the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation, it numbered nearly 200,000 members. At a later period it had spread from Bohemia to Moravia, Poland, and Hungary, and embraced within its fold a very large and leading part of the Bohemian nation, when Bohemia was in its glory, as one of the leading nations of Europe. Then followed the long struggle between Romanism and

the Protestant faith. In the compromise which followed the Thirty Years' War, the Church of the Brethren was delivered over to the mercy of the Papacy and the Jesuits. Sixteen of the leading men of the Church perished on the scaffold in one day. A reign of blood and terror followed. The worship of God according to the rites of the Brethren was made illegal; our ministers were imprisoned, banished, or put to death; our churches were confiscated; our books, and particularly the Bibles in the language of the people, were searched out and burned, and every effort was made to uproot and destroy every vestige of the power of the Church in the land of her birth and prestige. So great was the persecution, that the apparently reliable statement is made, that the population of Bohemia was decreased more than one-half. The Church was crushed out. Jesuitism and cruel bigotry prevailed. Religious liberty ceased in the land. Bohemia has never recovered from the blow. For nearly sixty years the Church existed in exile, or as men worshiped in secret places. But even in exile, in Poland and Hungary, the Church was not free from persecution. The result was disastrous. Yet even then, Amos Comenius, a Bishop of the Church, had a wonderful career of usefulness, as a preacher, writer, and educator. To him belongs the honor largely, of inaugurating the modern system of encyclopedias, and, with others, the kindergarten system of education. He was a powerful advocate of the education of the common people, thus aiding largely in establishing modern popular education. He reformed the schools of Sweden, and was invited by the English Government to do a similar work in England, but was hindered by political complications. His vast learning and ability affected the cause of education in all lands for good. He is honored by educated men everywhere, as one of the great educational leaders of the world.

From 1457 to 1722, 265 years is therefore the period of the Ancient Church of the Brethren.

In 1722 the beginning of a re-organization and renewal of the Church was made by emigrants from the Province of Moravia who cherished the old faith. These, with others, mainly exiles for conscience' sake, settled on the

estates of Count Zinzendorf and founded the town of Herrnhut, in Saxony. Under the leadership of this noble and pious Count, the Church was renewed. It received the historic Episcopate, and adopted the ancient principles of government and discipline, but in a somewhat changed and modified form, suited to their new circumstances. The Lord's blessing rested upon them, and in a short time the Church not only grew and prospered in the land of its renewal, but extended its work to other countries, and to heathen lands. In England its work spread in various directions and it numbered John Wesley among its converts. The origin of the Methodist Church is largely to be traced to the work of the Moravian ministry. Many leading features of Methodist government and discipline, such as the Presiding Eldership, Class Meetings, Love-Feasts, and perhaps even the Episcopacy, can easily be traced to the Moravian original. It is not doubted, however, that the Methodist Church has widely departed from this, and there has been a distinct and varied development in the Moravian Church, on the line of its ancient principles, so that to-day the difference between the various Methodist Chnrches and the Moravian Church, is perhaps greater than in the days of the two friends, Wesley and Zinzendorf, though fraternal relations continue.

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA.

In 1742, the Moravian Church organized its first permanent congregation in America, at Bethlehem, Pa. A previous attempt had however been made to establish a congregation in Georgia. Since that time, the American Church has made a history of varied activity in many departments of church work.

It is impossible to follow the work of the Church in all its branches during this long period. It was distinguished by three general features: *First*, Missions to the Indians. *Second*, Missions of an unsectarian character in the scattered settlements and towns. *Third*, Educational labors.

Its missionary enterprise was particularly manifest in the last century. Its Indian Missions in the Tuscarawas Valley, founded in 1772, were the first churches in what is now

the State of Ohio, and from them sprang the present Moravian Churches in that valley. The missionaries and particularly the heroic men, Zeisberger and Heckewelder, were influential in treaties with the Indian tribes, and in founding the State in 1803. The story of Moravian Indian Missions in various sections of our country is heroic and romantic. It has formed the theme for many writers.

But not only in Indian Missions, in Home Missions as well, the Church did a noble work, particularly among the scattered settlers of Pennsylvania, New York, New England, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia. This work was mainly among the Germans, but was not confined to them. From the very beginning there were English-speaking members and churches. An earnest and for a time partially successful effort was made to unite the Germans of the Colonies into one church organization, known as "The Pennsylvania Synod." This failed through no fault of the Moravians. The effort is worthy of record, as being in line with the union character of the Moravian Church.

In regard to educational efforts it is worthy of special mention, that the Moravian Church established the first schools in the State of Ohio in 1772, at the Indian Missions, the first Young Ladies' Seminary in this country at Bethlehem, Pa., in 1749, and the first Young Ladies' Seminary in the Southern States, in 1802, at Salem, North Carolina. Another Seminary, Linden Hall, was established at Lititz, Pa., in 1794. A boarding school for boys was established at Nazareth Hall, Nazareth Pa., in 1785, and the Moravian College and Theological Seminary, now at Bethlehem, Pa., was established in 1807. These institutions have ever done and are still doing a grand educational work.

The general history of the Renewed Church is a history largely of Foreign Missions. The answer that most people would give to the question: "What is the distinguishing feature of the Moravian Church?" is that it is a missionary church. The Church is indeed a pioneer in missionary work, and its missions, widely scattered over the earth, attest the Christian love and zeal of the Brethren. It is the

only Church whose membership in the foreign field greatly outnumbers the membership at home. But there are many other praiseworthy features of the Church, often overlooked, which any careful student can see. If the Church had not had great elements of strength at home, it could not do such a great work abroad. Nor have we been lacking in Home Mission activity, particularly in recent years.

Leaving now our history, with this short and imperfect sketch, I invite your attention to some of those leading features of the Church, that have enabled it to be a power for good both at home and abroad.

DOCTRINE.

WHAT DO MORAVIANS BELIEVE?

We believe the Bible. "The Bible, or the Holy Scriptures, is our only rule of faith and practice." Yet we do not reject whatever light honest research and sound learning may throw upon the sacred writings.

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

We believe in the doctrine of justification by faith, and of sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the Christian Church; the Church Universal, the children of God united together in Christ in one spirit. We do not hold that we are the only true Church, that we are right and the other churches necessarily wrong, but, on the contrary, we believe that the Moravian Church is only a branch of the Church Universal.

We have always believed in fraternal relations with Christians of every name, and with all branches of the Christian Church. We do not believe in partisan and sectarian strife, but seek peace and pursue it; yet we maintain and defend our doctrines and principles.

We do not believe in planting churches where a sufficient number of other evangelical churches already exist.

We believe in conversion, or regeneration, but do not believe that the operation of the Holy Spirit is confined to any one method. Usually we prefer quiet and thorough methods of Christian work.

We accept the Apostles' Creed, so-called, but beyond that have no formal creed by which the faith of our membership is tested, other than by God's Word. Yet other creeds are recognized as containing scriptural truth, but are never made tests of faith. Doctrines generally received among us may be found in the results of the General Synod and in our Liturgies, Litanies, hymns and catechisms.

We believe in Christian liberty as essential to Christian unity. Our ancient motto is that at the head of this pamphlet—"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." We do not demand that Christian unity should be brought about on the basis of the doctrines and principles of the Moravian Church, but rather recognize the One Spirit operating by diversity of methods in all churches.

We do not believe in exalting minor questions into vital differences. Calvin, Arminius, Luther, Zwingli and Wesley, might, as far as doctrine is concerned, have all been members of the Moravian Church, if they would have had charity enough to enter into fraternal relations with Christians of diverse views. We do not define with authority those things which the Scriptures do not define and decide. All doctrinal disputes are avoided, as far as possible, and particularly those in regard to the Holy Communion. The Moravian view is that this is a divine mystery, not to be doctrinally defined, except in the language of Scripture; but any other Protestant view is permissible. As a result in part of this Christian liberty, there has never been a division or schism in the Church in all the centuries of its existence, ever since 1457, it has remained a Unity, one Church throughout the world. Trials for heresy have been almost unknown, and yet the doctrines of the Church have remained pure and evangelical, even according to the standards of other churches. We have not been moved by every wind of doctrine; but, partly because of our liberty in non-essentials, we have been enabled to present the great leading truths of Christianity with force and power, and at the same time proclaim the Gospel in its fullness, declaring the whole counsel of God. These views of

Christian truth, moreover, have not been adopted in recent times, when they are becoming popular, but were always held by us, even when they were unpopular.

DISCIPLINE.

While there is wide liberty in doctrine, in practical religion we require a high standard of Christian liviug. We abhor a dead faith. A Christian should bear in his daily life the peaceable fruits of righteousness; the fruits of the Spirit should be manifest. A sinful, or an immoral life is proof positive that a man is not a true Christian, however correct his creed may be. Hence the standard of Church discipline is high. This is not always maintained in its purity, but the effort is constantly made to maintain it. Moreover, we regard discipline not only as exercised in the reproof, correction, suspension or exclusion of members, but also in the training and education of souls in the Christian life.

MEMBERSHIP.

Accordingly we are careful in the reception of members, to accept only such who can not only take the vows of the Church upon them, but also give evidence of a living faith in Christ their Saviour. Every name is proposed first to the Elders before a public reception into the Church. We receive members of other churches by letter, or if this can not be given, by profession of faith. We receive others by adult baptism, or by confirmation, after a course of instruction in the leading doctrines of Christianity, sufficient to satisfy the pastor and elders that the candidate fully understands the vows of the Church and the duties of membership. The pastor always seeks to lead those whom he instructs to a living faith in Christ, if they do not already possess it. In addition to this, special Gospel services, in which the Gospel is pressed home to the hearts of the people are often held, after the manner of other churches, but no special or invariable method is used.

EDUCATION.

While some liberty is allowed as to forms of baptism, as a rule we believe that it is the duty of Christian parents to

present their children to the Lord in Holy Baptism, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The children of church members are regarded as the children of the church, and are enrolled in the church-books. They are not, however, communicant members until they voluntarily unite with the church, by confirming their baptismal covenant. Special services are held for them in addition to the Sunday-school. Children's Day has been maintained in the Church ever since the year 1727. It is usually observed on the Sunday nearest the 17th of August, to commemorate a great revival among the children on the first children's day; but in some congregations, since other Churches have adopted the custom, we celebrate it in June. These are not the only services held for the children, but other seasons, such as Christmas and Advent, are occasions for special children's services. Thus the Church seeks to train the children for Christ. But the beginning of our Christian education is in the home. We seek to strongly impress upon all parents their duty to make the home Christian, and to begin every day with reading of the Scriptures and prayer. The children are not left to grow up with the hope that some day, in some great revival, they will be converted, but from their infancy it is the duty of the parents to lead them to a living faith in Christ, as their personal Saviour. The home training of children, in the spirit of Christian love, has always been regarded as an important part of the discipline and education of the Church. No Moravian parents are doing their duty who neglect it.

In addition to the education of the home the church services and the Sunday-school, we believe in good schools. Ignorance is no part of Christianity. We are children of light and not of darkness. We are called unto knowledge. While knowledge in general is never made a test of membership, and the souls of the ignorant are precious as well as those of the learned, yet we believe it to be the duty of the Church to see that her children should receive the best possible education. To this end, in a few churches that can afford the expense, parochial schools of a high grade are maintained. (The

majority of our churches in this country, however, utilize the public schools; but we seek to aid in preserving in them a high standard of education.) In addition to these, we have a number of schools, seminaries and colleges, in this and other countries, for boys and girls, young men and young women. These are largely patronized, not only by our own members, but by pupils from all Churches, and from all parts of the world. In these schools we seek to maintain, as nearly as possible, the discipline of home life, and to extend to the pupils individual care. The Christian spirit pervades these institutions. We seek to do thorough rather than brilliant work, to educate the heart as well as the brain, and to prepare our youth for a practical participation in the duties of life. The educational influence of the Church has been felt in a very much wider circle than its membership.

GOVERNMENT.

The government of the Moravian Church is of a long established and historic character, well worthy of study. It is somewhat complex in its nature, yet simple in its general features. There are several general principles which will aid us in understanding it.

We recognize no other head to the Church than our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of all authority. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ governs the Church through His Word, or the Holy Scriptures; through the guidance of the Holy Spirit; by Divine Providence, as manifested by the various circumstances and conditions in which we are placed; and by the laws and principles of church government established by the Church Universal, and the Moravian Church in particular, through the wisdom and experience of the ages.

The government is after its own kind, but for purposes of comparison it may be said to be representative and presbyterial in form, rather than episcopal. Though our Bishops have a definite office, the episcopacy is a spiritual office, and is to be viewed rather as an ancient order in the ministry than an office of Church government.

Another feature of the government is, that it is confer-

ential. There is no one-man power anywhere in our government. Two or three must agree in all questions of importance. Even a pastor is not independent, but in addition to obedience to the laws of the Synod he must consult the Board of Elders and Trustees.

Another principle is that of fraternity, or brotherhood. At the foundation of all our churches is a "Brotherly Agreement" between the members. Even a Bishop, in relation to other members, is simply a brother. Although there is authority by virtue of office, apart from the office we are simply brethren, on an equality of fraternal relations and privileges. A Moravian is recognized as a brother in all our churches everywhere.

SYNODS AND CONFERENCES.

Turning now from principles to institutions, we may say that the highest governmental body in the Church is the General Synod, constituted mainly of delegates elected by the Provincial Synods, and representing the Church throughout the world. The next in authority are the Provincial Synods. These are composed of the active ministry and the representatives elected by the congregations in one or other of the countries or States constituting a Province of the Church. The next in authority are District Synods, constituted to act for various districts into which the American Province is divided. Each of these bodies has executive boards.

The General Synod elects a Unity's Elders' Conference, which has general charge of the affairs under the direction of the General Synod, directs the Foreign Missions of the Church, and forms the highest board of appeal throughout the Unity.

The Provincial Synods each elect a Provincial Elders' Conference, which has charge especially of the spiritual affairs of the Province, receives, appoints and dismisses ministers, and superintends and controls Provincial affairs, under the direction of the Synod. They have the duty of adjusting differences and disputes in the congregations when their assistance is called for, and they form the highest board of appeal in the Province. In addition to the Pro-

vincial Elders there are other executive boards, such as the Board of Church Extension, the boards of trustees of educational institutions and of church funds.

The District Synods have no Elders' Conferences, but may constitute such offices as may be necessary to carry out their acts, in strict subordination to Moravian principles and Provincial and general legislation.

CONGREGATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

The government of the congregation is vested in the congregation itself. While the congregation as a local church is subject to the general laws of the Synods, to the fraternal oversight of the elders, and the care of the pastors, yet the administration of its government is solely through its own officers. The chief authority in a congregation is vested in the Congregation Council. This consists often of the entire communicant membership, but sometimes of the brethren only who have reached the age of 21, as the congregation itself may decide. The government of the congregation is administered by the pastor, associated with a Board of Elders, who receive members, administer discipline, and have general direction of its spiritual affairs. The financial affairs of the church are managed by a Board of Trustees. Other offices are constituted as needed.

The self-government of the individual, according to the law of Christ, and the doctrine of God's Word, is presupposed; but, as an organized body, the Church Council is the fountain of governmental authority, as truly as the town meeting is of the government of the United States. This is true even though the ministry, by virtue of office, have some special privileges. Yet above all conferences, synods, or councils, the authority of God's Word is recognized. The chief question is not, What is the will of the majority? but What is the will of the Divine Head of the Church, even Christ? The will of the majority rules, it is true, but only because it is the conscientious expression of what the majority decides to be right and well-pleasing in the sight of God. This constant recognition of the government of our Saviour has always been a leading feature of Moravian government and discipline.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS.

It must be observed moreover that the duties and privileges of these various governmental bodies are limited and definite. None are absolute, except in their own province. Even the General Synod cannot overthrow the rights and privileges of a Province or a congregation. The government is well balanced, and long established. It is administered in the spirit of brotherly love, and allowing, as it does, a very large degree of Christian liberty it has long been marked with comparative little friction, and with manifold blessing to all the churches.

ADVANTAGES.

Through its systematic working the unity of the Church has been maintained for more than four centuries. Large enterprises have been carried on by the united efforts of the various Provinces, or by the whole Church. Our extensive Foreign Missions have been conducted successfully in this manner, by the Unity's Elders' Conference. We believe that the principles of our government are scriptural. Yet the progressive character of Christian government is recognized, and the development and application of the principles of the kingdom of God on earth is sought rather than a mere copying of the institutions of the Church in the days of the Apostles. Many of these principles appear in other Churches also, particularly in the Methodist, and in some respects in the Presbyterian Churches. The Moravian government and discipline, however, being perhaps the oldest, is modeled after no other.

APPOINTMENTS.

The system of appointments differs from all, or nearly all others. It is the duty of the Provincial Elders to see that every church is supplied with a pastor, and every minister, as far as possible, with a field of labor. In case a pastor desires a change he requests the Elders to call him elsewhere. If the congregation desires a change, through their elders they may notify the Provincial Elders to this effect. In either case, if they deem it advisable the pastor is called to another field of labor; or they may call him,

if in their judgment a change is desirable, without any request being made. In any case, where a vacancy occurs, the Provincial Elders proceed to nominate a minister, who in their judgment is available and a suitable man for the place. The elders, and in some cases the trustees also of the congregation, have the privilege of rejecting the nominee. Yet this should never be done unless good and sufficient reasons exist for such action, since otherwise injustice is done to worthy men, and the Elders' Conference, in whom the duty and responsibility of appointment is vested are embarrassed in their work by an unreasonable use of the veto power of the congregations. In case the congregation accepts the nominee the call goes to the minister, who may decline the call. In this case another will be nominated in like manner. If accepted, the appointment is made for an indefinite period, as there is no time limit, and comparatively long pastorates are common. This general system is sometimes varied at the discretion of the Provincial Elders, by first mentioning a possible appointment to the minister. In the appointments to home missions, to foreign missions, or positions in educational institutions this general system is modified. This system, imperfectly sketched, has many advantages. No minister is required to "candidate" before the churches and preach trial sermons. No minister is sent to a place without his consent. No congregation has forced upon them an objectionable pastor. Congregations are not imposed upon by frauds. The congregation has the advantage of the experience of Provincial Elders, who are acquainted with the ministry and the congregations, in selecting a pastor, and the Church in general has the advantage of the best possible appointment of its ministry for effective work. No church that can provide an adequate salary is long without a pastor, and usually all ministers are supplied with situations if they are worthy. Ministerial ability is not measured by the amount of the salary. We have no "thousand dollar men" and "five hundred dollar men" in the Church, but every man is called where he will be the most useful, as a rule. Yet a minister's ability and circumstances are always considered.

ADAPTATION.

Another point worthy of attention is that the government of the church is capable of adjustment to varying conditions and sentiments. The general principles are the same everywhere, but the administration of the government varies considerably in different lands, and even in the different congregations of the same Province. Uniformity in some things is sought, but not by compulsion. In other things the church is permitted to adjust its government on the line of Moravian principles to the national, political, social and spiritual conditions with which it must deal. It is thus pre-eminently universal in its character, finding an entrance into many lands and calling into use many languages. It is a common mistake to view the Moravian as a distinctively German Church. In this country the majority of our membership speak the English language. There are more Moravian churches in England than in Germany, though the membership is not so large, and a greater work is done in Germany. In the home churches more Moravian members use the English than the German language. We owe very much to the Germans, but the Church never was national in character, but always had a universal spirit suited to Christian work in all nations.

WORSHIP.

Our forms are rich and varied. They are nearly as complete as those of the Episcopal Church, but are entirely independent, and in no way based upon the services of that excellent Church. Our hymns are excellent and are used in other Churches, particularly those of the well-known Moravian poets, James Montgomery, John Cennick and Count Zinzendorf. Our liturgical forms are well suited to fulfill their purpose of giving the whole people an opportunity to take part in an orderly but hearty manner in the services of the sanctuary.

They are in use, however, mainly on special occasions and in the regular Sunday morning service. At other services, such as the Sunday evening service and prayer-meeting, we usually have no litanies or liturgies.

Our forms of worship differ greatly, however, in different countries, and even in different congregations. In this country our hymns are used in all the churches, but the use of the liturgies and litanies is not universal. In some churches the entire liturgy is used in its appropriate seasons, in others parts of it, in a few churches the litanies are used but seldom, if at all. Every Province, moreover, has its own liturgies and hymns. Thus it will be seen that there is no complete uniformity. A greater degree of uniformity is taught by many, but it has never been regarded as necessary to unity, and the compulsory use of forms of worship has always been considered as opposed to that liberty in non-essentials, which has been one of the distinguishing features of the Church in all its history, and has enabled it to adapt itself to varying conditions and sentiments. Usually our worship is plain in its forms and of a popular nature.

The main burden of our preaching is thoroughly Christian and evangelical. We seek to edify as well as convert men. To this end, various services are used in addition to the ordinary services of the Church. The Holy Communion is solemnly celebrated from four to eight times a year. Love-feasts are held, similar to those held in the days of the Apostles, and mentioned in the book of Jude, the twelfth verse. The congregations are divided into classes, according to age and sex, and in most congregations services are held suitable to these classes. Young People's Societies and Missionary Societies are found in many congregations. There is nothing very peculiar and nothing at all outlandish, as some have imagined, in the services of the Moravian Church. All things are done decently and in order. Good music and congregational singing are customary. The so-called Moravian Tunes have been recognized by American Publishers and Editors as excellent, but they are not the only ones used, since selections are often made from other collections. The general character, moreover, of our services is not somber but joyous. This is particularly manifested in our Christmas and Easter services. In the Moravian service for the burial of the dead, the Moravian view of the Christian Life is well illustrated. The committal service of most

churches, though proclaiming immortality and the resurrection, contains as its leading feature the sad words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Instead of this the Moravian service uses the following verse, or a similar one:

"Now to the earth let these remains
In hope committed be,
Until the body changed attains
Blest immortality."

This is sung while the body is being lowered into the grave, thus giving us the leading thought of the service, not mortality, but immortality; not corruption and decay, but a glorious resurrection. None of our services are, as some have ignorantly imagined, Roman Catholic; nor are we in any way connected with that church. The Church is, and always has been, thoroughly Protestant, even before Protestantism was known by that name.

AN INVITATION TO BETTER ACQUAINTANCE.

The Church has been recognized in fraternal relations by many Protestant Churches. The Parliament of England acknowledged us as a Protestant Episcopal Church as early as 1749. The Church has been kindly treated and even extravagantly praised by many writers and authors of intelligence. On the other hand it has often suffered from the stories of writers who were but partially acquainted with the Church, or some congregations in it, who by exaggerating some features of the church service, or by inaccurately describing some custom that has perhaps passed out of general use for a century, have given interesting descriptions of Moravian peculiarities, sensational in character. Unfortunately many people have formed their opinion of the Church through such popular misrepresentations. We have our individuality it is true; but we are no more peculiar than the larger churches of the land, only we are not so well known. The Church is well suited to the American people. It has an American history older than our national existence. Its government is of a popular nature, similar in many respects to our national government. It has shown its ability to adapt itself to the varied character of our people. Even our most peculiar

services, such as the love-feasts, are popular where people understand their true nature. Prejudice, and often excusable ignorance of what we really are, has been a great hindrance to our work in many fields of labor. It is one object of this pamphlet to invite to a better acquaintance, and to a more thorough knowledge of the Church.

THE STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH.

Numerically we outnumber Gideon's band, but in much of our work of faith, we have been like Gideon's band in winning victories.

In this country we had in 1893, 90 congregations, 12,535 communicant members, and a total of 19,497 in church connection, including children. Of these 47 churches, having a communicant membership of 8,050, use the English language in their services. The Church in Great Britain numbers 40 churches, with 3,136 communicant members, and a total in church connection of 5,660. In Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Bohemia, the regular churches number 6,483 communicants, and 8,492 in total church connection. This makes a total communicant membership including the 369 Foreign Missionaries, of 22,523, and a total membership, including the 400 missionaries and their children in foreign lands, of 34,049. These numbers however of the home and regular churches are very far from representing the full numerical strength. There are 93,246 persons under our care in the Foreign Mission field. A large proportion of these belong to individual churches that have in fact become self-supporting, particularly in the West Indies. Moreover, there are, at the lowest estimate, 70,000 persons on the Continent of Europe, who belong to what is called the "Diaspora." This is the German Moravian Home Mission work carried on within the State Churches of Europe, and of Germany in particular. It is an effort to awaken souls in these churches to greater spiritual life, and bring them into a closer communion with God, by services of an evangelistic nature, and by special services of prayer and praise. Yet the people attending these services, and in indirect connection with our Church, retain their membership in the State Churches.

It is a work in harmony with other churches, and within the lines of other churches, that is hard for us Americans to understand. But it has been accompanied by manifold blessings. It could only be done by a Church with broad, charitable and unsectarian principles, such as the Moravian Church possesses. This work has not only been a blessing to the European churches, but has added to our strength. Counting then the Diaspora and the Missions as a part of the numerical strength of the Church, we find that the total number of souls under the care of the Moravian Church is 197,295.

The Church has regular congregations in the following countries: The United States, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and Bohemia. In addition to these a Diaspora and Home Mission work is is conducted in Russia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and France. There are churches in the following States of the American Union: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and North Dakota. In Alaska, there are missions to the Eskimos, and in California, Kansas, the Indian Territory and Canada, there are missions to the Indians. Foreign Missions exist in the following countries. Greenland, Labrador, Jamaica, and the West India Islands, the Mosquito Coast, Nicaragua; Surinam and Demerara, S. A.; the Cape Colony, German Central Africa, Australia and Thibet. The Leper Hospital, Jerusalem, Palestine, is also in charge of Moravian Missionaries, and is indeed a noble enterprise.

WHY IS THE MORAVIAN CHURCH SO SMALL?

This question is often asked. One answer is, that it is not so very small after all. Nearly 200,000 members and adherents is not a small number, especially when we remember that after the long period of persecution, in 1723 the Church was almost extinct. It is only small in comparison with the phenomenal growth of some other churches. Yet in comparison with what the Church might have been and deserves to be, it is small. A careful study

of our history will alone explain this. But we may briefly explain that for nearly seventy-five years, the Church made no special effort to increase the number of its home congregations, but threw its strength into Foreign Missions, into Education, into the Diaspora work, and into evangelical work in this country, in which the fruits fell mainly to other churches. Its influence and power for good were felt in many directions, but the numerical increase at home was small. Since 1849, however, in this country, this policy has given place to a policy of church extension. Since that date we have more than trebled the number of churches and membership, and the annual percentage of growth is still larger. The Church is vigorous and growing. It is safe to predict that it will not always remain small. But the strength of the Church must not be measured by numbers alone. The power of its faith, the thoroughness of its work, and its wide and enduring influence should be considered. This Church, which many consider small, has endured for more than four centuries of prosperity and adversity. It has sent forth a host of the heralds of the cross to preach the Gospel to the heathen, keeping almost, if not quite, the leading place in Foreign Missions for more than a century and a half. It has commanded the devotion of many heroic men and women in the most arduous and most difficult mission fields of the world. It has maintained such extensive Home Missions on the Continent of Europe that its adherents outnumber the home churches many times. It has secured the devotion and adherence of many noble and great men. Such a Church must have a largeness that is not measured by mere numbers. There must be and are vital principles and great truths at the basis of this institution to enable it to endure such tests of strength and power. The Moravians must not only be a good and pious people, as many suppose us to be, and we hope that we are, but we must have some right and true principles, or we should have perished as a Church long ago.

Nor is our power felt only in our membership; it is manifested far beyond it. This wider influence has been felt for good particularly in Germany, where the pure

Gospel preaching of our ministers, their piety, and the depth of their learning has had a profound influence in counteracting the tendencies to dead orthodoxy on the one hand, and rationalism on the other. We are not Lutherans, as some have supposed, but our relations to the Lutheran Churches have been in the main cordial and mutually helpful. The influence of the Moravian life and doctrine upon early Methodism, in deepening its spiritual life and forming its institutions, is acknowledged by many Methodist historians. The broad charitable position in relation to all churches, which we have always held, has not been without its effect in aiding to bring about an era of better fraternal relations, and the cessation of sectarian strife. The unity of the Church at all times amid needful diversity, has demonstrated that it is possible to maintain a Christian Church, upon a broad and liberal basis of evangelical Christianity. The scholarship of the Church, which has always aimed at thoroughness and depth, has contributed much to the learning, science, art and literature of the world. Our light, though small in comparison with some, has been a bright one, and it has not been hidden.

AN APPEAL.

This Church of the Brethren, thoroughly protestant, fraternal in character, pure in its discipline, evangelical, charitable and unsectarian, is a Church in which Christian people of various views and differing opinions can unite on one creed of Christ crucified, as the Saviour of sinners, and on "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." Moravian ministers need not preach our creed, the doctrines of our eminent men, as the peculiar features of our doctrine, government or discipline, but it is their duty to preach the Gospel of Christ in its completeness and power, as they find it in the Holy Scripture, and with perfect liberty.

If any who read this pamphlet are members of other Christian Churches, we wish you prosperity and joy in your faith. We do not proselyte, but rather would urge you to

faithfulness to Christ in your own church. Yet we hope to have your favorable opinion and fraternal regard. You will always be welcome to any of our services. But if any of you are so situated that you cannot attend the worship of your own church, or if any are seeking a church home, or are not members of any church, we invite you to come with us and we will do you good. If you cannot join the church at once, we invite you to become acquainted with it by attending our services. Strangers are always welcome, the pews are always free, and our pastors and people will be glad to see you. If the church nearest your residence happens to be a small church, weak and struggling with difficulties, do not judge the whole Church by it, for we have many strong congregations, but rather, if you can, give a hand to help make it strong. It deserves your encouragement. It needs your help. And if the church happens to be the only one in your neighborhood, working for the good of the community in which you live, can you not lay aside your denominational preferences and join in a union effort on the broad platform of Moravian doctrines and principles? If that particular congregation is not all that it ought to be according to your judgment, there is a good opportunity, if your heart is right toward God, to help to make it a living Church of Christ.

In conclusion, permit me to say that I have endeavored to present the Church in a favorable light, as its character demands, and as one that loves it should. Others have found some fault with it, sometimes justly perhaps, often I think unjustly. The Church is not perfect, and I am not blind to its imperfections, but I prefer to let others point them out, or use my influence, whatever it may be, at the proper time and place to effect improvement. For myself I love the Church, its sound principles and depth, its quiet ways and earnest spirit, its Christian love and zeal, its fellowship, its charity, its solemn and joyous services.

We earnestly hope that this short treatise will lead to still greater loyalty on the part of its membership, to a better acquaintance on the part of many, and that many more will choose the Moravian Church as their church home.

Copies of this pamphlet can be ordered from the author, or from The Moravian Publication Concern, Bethlehem, Pa.

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